

Messenger



Circuit magazine

Spring 2018

Message from Ruth

Dear friends,

I squirm at the majority of portrayals of Christian faith and especially clergy which we encounter on TV, but then I rejoice at the moments when a writer captures something of truth and even more occasionally something of faith in their characters. I rejoice in the joy and comedy of rural life in *The Vicar of Dibley*, the comic profundity and honesty of *Rev.* played by the brilliant Tom Hollander and my all-time favourite, *Call the Midwife*, where life & faith are so intimately entwined. But I believe one of the most powerful pieces of television that I have witnessed in recent years is Jimmy McGovern's *Broken*, which aired last year starring Sean Bean as a Catholic priest. In this 6-part series, we are faced with some of the most shattering truths and deepest struggles of our privileged society; poverty, mental health, suicide, family challenges, abuse – to name but a few. It certainly is not viewing for the faint-hearted; it is rated at 15 for good reason. In the series the priest seeks to fulfil his calling to be the hands, the feet, the face and the voice of Jesus, but yet we also see the deep vulnerability of his humanity in the midst of this. It is with gratitude that I know as a minister, I have the support not only of my congregations, but also of the likes of Foodbank and CAP (Christians Against Poverty) who seek to support those who find themselves in some of these similar situations.

My favourite phrase at the moment is about us being 'the hands on the end of God's arms'. As Christians we are called to reach out to those who are struggling. In *Broken* the priest feels that in his own brokenness, he has failed many, but the reality is ultimately different,

and he is himself blessed by those that he has blessed. As we journey through the time of Lent, preparing for Easter, let's be aware of others and how we may help, even when we feel like we're the ones who need help. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus read the following words from the prophet Isaiah, may we continue that ministry:

"The Lord God has put his Spirit in me, because the Lord has appointed me to tell the good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken, to tell the captives they are free."

COMMENT ABOUT THIS EDITION OF THE MESSENGER

Whilst drawing together contributions for this edition of 'The Messenger,' it started to become apparent that there is very much a historical nature to the articles enclosed. Maybe this is not a bad thing as we will be celebrating the formation of our Methodist Circuit this year. The articles speak of the hopes for 'The Church' from one person through to the wonderful ways in which God has moved in the lives of both individuals and the church in the past. History gives us pause to reflect on the 'successes' of the past, whilst also helping us to see and learn from our mistakes. The German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is credited with the comment: *"The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history,"* the obvious point is that we repeat the same mistakes of the past. As Christians we would do well to thank God for the good things in the past, but we live in the present and we should learn the lessons of church history to help us to be effective for Him today.



WHEN GOD DID SOMETHING DIFFERENT

In 2002 the general church meeting at Market Drayton in Shropshire received a presentation from Paul Savill and Robin Perry simple entitled “3rd Day”.

Their vision was to produce professionally a new and contemporary musical telling the Easter story and to put it on in a theatre or concert hall in spring 2003.

Rarely has a church meeting been so captivated by the vision and potential of what was being suggested. A small circuit in a rural county, Market Drayton is now stranger to modern worship. The church enjoys weekly worship led by a gifted and sensitive worship band and is the home of the North Shropshire Methodist Youth Choir.

Perhaps it was the experience of good quality worship music that engendered confidence in the project, but, if you ask those present at the meeting, they would unashamedly suggest that what was begun that evening was a work of the Holy Spirit whose presence was evident from the start.

The atmosphere was tangible as the meeting voted unanimously to support the project in any way possible and God’s blessing was tested in setting a target for initial fundraising within a few weeks. As Gideon did, the church at Market Drayton laid a fleece before the Lord and His blessing became more and more evident as initial

funding targets were met and exceeded, as the music, band and choir came together, as venue, dates, set and costumes all began to fit together like the pieces of a giant jigsaw. The musical “3rd Day” weaves together music and Gospel readings. Choir and soloists tell the story as it is, with just a touch of drama and dance.

Swelled

At the heart of The Choir was the North Shropshire Youth Choir. Unfortunately they do not boast 100 members and the Choir was swelled not only by friends from Altrincham Youth Choir, but by church members from



across the town and District and from across denominations. The worship band was formed especially for the show and gifted musicians travelled miles to work together to produce a wonderful sound.

It was extremely hard work, particularly for the team of Paul Savill (author and producer), Robin Perry (who arranged the band music, laid down the backing tracks and worked the band members very hard), Alison Savill (Paul’s sister-in-law and choir leader who wrote the parts for the choir and kept them all working hard) and Mark Savill (the lynchpin of the team). There were of course, other team members who raised funds, managed the finance and ensured the whole project was pray for constantly. There were times when things got really tough and the prayer support was particularly important for the success of the whole project.

And what a success it was! On Saturday, April 5, the Victoria Hall in Hanley reverberated with music and song at the choir of 100 voices

and the live band presented “3rd Day” to a packed house. The musical took the listener from the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, through the events of holy week to Easter morning, with a final reminder that this was not the end of the story.

With musical styles to suit all tastes, the good news was told in contemporary pop, rock and swing. Latin sounds, a lament and the four-part harmony of the choir all worked together to produce an uplifting and challenging presentation of the Easter story.

The secret of success was to stay focused on God on the original vision. Every step of the way the team sought God’s guidance, supported each other and make sure they didn’t get above themselves!

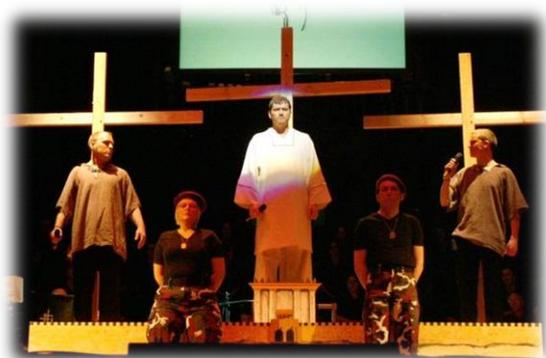
Marvellous

Those leaving the theatre at the end of the evening stopped to have a word with the cast, saying “It was worth travelling from the North Wales to see this. It’s been marvellous, simply marvellous!”, “I couldn’t stay in my seat I had to stand up and join in with ‘Thine be the Glory’.”

The show the show was summed up by Radio Stoke as “phenomenal!” If you missed the show the good news is there are



plans to for further productions next year – at Easter People in Southport, in Manchester and Lancaster... if you get chance to go along for a splendid evening... and take a friend. “3rd Day - When God did something different.”



*Article from the
Methodist Recorder
2nd October 2003*

A Life Transformed

Whilst researching the history of the local Methodist Circuit, Margaret Baker came across the following obituary:

Obituary from the Primitive Methodist Magazine 1846.

Died at Ternhill in the Market Drayton branch of the Prees Green Primitive Methodist Circuit on April 1st, 1846 John Goodhall, in or about the 75th year of his age. The former part of his life was spent in open rebellion against God; such as in cock fighting, swearing, gambling and other vices. In these he went to great lengths, till, as he was returning one night from his revels, the Lord convinced him of his folly and danger. He endured the pangs of a guilty conscience for about a month and then, while hearing a Wesleyan Local Preacher explain the text, “*I will, be thou clean,*” (Mt. 8: 3) he cast

his stone by faith on Christ and found redemption in the forgiveness of his sins. He joined the Wesleyans and remained with them for thirty years. Losing his wife, he came to live with his daughter at Wem. His work as a Christian remained consistent till he was called to join the Church Triumphant. On March 22nd, 1846, an illness which ended in his death befell him and, while a sufferer in the body he was closely beset by the powers of darkness, though his faith in Christ was unmoved. Through prayer he gained complete victory as his outward man failed and in peace he left the world.

Dare to dream...

The following was found in Eyam Church, Derbyshire. The author is unknown as is the date, but it was clearly written on an old typewriter, which gives some indication of its age...

I dream of churches here on earth:

Where not only the person who cleans is valued as highly as the person who preaches, but where the person taking a rest from all tasks is valued too.

Where different expressions of worship are not only tolerated, but welcomed. Where meditative contemplation, symbolic ritualism rich with meaning, dance, drama, hugging and laughter take place, each in their time and turn.

Where fashions in the style and structure of worship, are recognised as here today but gone tomorrow; held in cupped hands so each movement can pour in for a while and grow, and then pour out again.

Where order and structure are recognised as necessary and valuable, so that people can have a part to play and see where their contribution fits in as they work with others.

Where senior citizens are valued for being reservoirs of life's experiences, which are there to be poured out for the benefit of others.

Where people are given space to grow. Where each can prayerfully reflect, reconsider, move on, make different and more appropriate contributions to the fellowship and receive affirmation on support from others whilst doing so.

Where we have learnt to love and accept one another as we are.

Where what happens outside the life the church is seen to be as of much importance to God in His world as what happens inside, and both for given attention.

Where the inner strength of Christians is built up so that, no matter whether the immediate environment is secular or Christian, they feel secure enough to make their contribution alone or with others. Where this inner strength enables them to withstand social pressures and realise their God-given abilities and take initiatives and make choices.

Finally I dream of a church here on earth where Christians realise that they are part of the local body of Christians, who are part of the whole national body of Christians, who were part of the whole international body of Christians, who are part of the body of Christians throughout all ages - rich variety of all sorts, but all His. To the Glory of God, amen!



Memories of Rev. Doug Savill

- by Mark, Paul & Peter Savill

Dad was born on 12th September 1932 in Langley-Upper-Green, a small village in North West Essex.

He was the oldest child of Frederick Ebenezer Savill and Florence Hilda Savill, and together with his brothers Hugh and Alan and sister Ann, they grew up in the family home called Laburnum House, which stands near the edge of the village, bordered by open fields.

Dad would often recall a happy childhood in this lovely rural setting. He would also tell stories of watching countless planes fly overhead during the war, with there being numerous airfields in the surrounding countryside.

Growing up, we remember Dad telling us that he only went to school for a few weeks during his whole childhood. It was many years later that we heard the full story. Dad was born two months premature, and when he was very young, Dad contracted various childhood illnesses, including rheumatic fever, and was too unwell to attend school regularly. After his parents died, we were shown a picture of Dad as a boy sitting in a wicker wheelchair, the type you might see in an Agatha Christie film. It's a strange coincidence that he spent the last 2 years of his life in a wheelchair, which was a huge frustration to him.

Apparently, Dad was told he would never walk and never work, and when he was very weak spent some time living with his Auntie Evelyn in her bungalow just along the road from his home. However, as he grew older, Dad used to spend time on his Uncle George's-farm

nearby working for pocket money, and it wasn't long before his health improved, and he was working as a farm labourer at first Church Farm, then later at Langley Lawn Farm in the neighbouring village of Langley-lower-Green. He would tell us stories of tractor driving, killing chickens ready for dinner, and fighting off an aggressive cornered rat with a machete!

Dad loved his cricket and played for the village team for many years. There were many times when there would be his dad, the three brothers and a brother-in-law playing for Langley, with his mum and sister making the teas. Dad played cricket into his late 50's, and here in Market Drayton famously opened the batting for the 3rd team, scoring 1 not out in 40 overs (he actually got his 1 on the last ball of the game!). Dad and his brothers also loved football, and they were all Spurs fans. Dad recalled going to White Hart Lane in the 1950's, but his favourite Spurs story was once loudly cheering them on at an away match at Sunderland in the 1960's, stood amongst the Sunderland fans with our mum repeatedly telling him 'Be quiet Douglas!'. Fortunately, no harm came to him, probably because he had wisely chosen to wear his dog collar to go to the match!

Back to Langley. Every Sunday, Dad's family used to attend the local village Primitive Methodist Chapel. Methodism was definitely in Dad's blood, with his own grandfather, George Wombwell, being a Primitive Methodist Preacher and his mum running the chapel prayer meeting. Dad became more and more involved with church, and once he was able to drive, he became involved in running the youth club at the church in the nearby town of Saffron Walden.

It wasn't long before Dad had the call to become a local preacher, which subsequently led to a call to the Methodist Ministry. In 1962 he left Langley to study at Cliff College in Derbyshire. At Cliff, he had to work extra "manuals" in the gardens to help pay his way along with some help from family. He was welcomed by other

students who later said how impressed they were with his approach to College life and his dedication to his calling. Dad always referred to himself as a “Cliff Man”.

It was on a Cliff College Mission in Sedgefield, County Durham, that Dad met our mum, Catherine Minto. Love blossomed and they were married in May 1967.

Following his time at Cliff, Dad candidated for the Methodist Ministry and attended Handsworth College in Birmingham from 1963-1966 before being ordained in Wolverhampton.

Dad started his Methodist Ministry in the North East, serving first at Weardale in County Durham, where both Paul and Mark were born. He then moved to Stockton-on-Tees in Cleveland, and during his time there he was part of BBC Radio Cleveland’s ‘God Squad’, producing and editing the weekly broadcasted church service.

In 1977, his ministry led him to Otley in West Yorkshire. We lived in a large old manse, which conveniently backed onto Otley Cricket Club’s ground. Peter was born in 1981 and our family was complete.

In 1984, we moved to Market Drayton, where his major task was to bring two church congregations together and see through the construction of the current church. We are told that there were some differences of opinion as to the design and budget for the new building, but Dad in his steady, calm and unruffled way brought people together and successfully saw through the project.

It was whilst Dad was minister in Market Drayton that mum first became ill with cancer, and it was during her illness that Dad was called to leave and move to Northwich in 1991, his last stationing before he retired. As many of you know, Mum died in March 1992, when Dad was 60 and Peter only 10. It was obviously a very difficult

time for him, but with great strength he calmly continued his ministry whilst caring for Peter.

Late the following year, having met through the church, Dad married Pat Robinson in Northwich Town Church. Dad retired in 1999 and he, Pat and Peter moved to Wheelock near Sandbach. Dad and Pat became actively involved in Wheelock Methodist Church, with Dad continuing to preach regularly and Pat playing the organ.

Dad had a hip replacement in 2004 and was due to have the other replaced, but unfortunately this was never done. Walking became a struggle for him, and in September 2014 he was admitted to Leyton Hospital with an infection and stayed there for some 6 weeks. We were called to the hospital one night in October 2014 with the worry he wouldn't live through the night, only to see him sat up in bed the next day wondering what all the fuss was about!

However, Dad was now unable to walk and was formally diagnosed with Parkinsons, which his brother Hugh also had. As a result, it was impossible for him to return home, and he moved into Church House Nursing Home outside Nantwich in October 2014, where Pat spent most of every day sat with him (although he was often asleep).

Dad was desperate to be in his own home, and upon the recommendation of Trevor Williams, we approached the Methodist Ministers Housing Society to see if they could help. We will be forever grateful that they helped Dad & Pat buy their bungalow in Market Drayton, and the prospect of moving seemed to give Dad renewed strength and optimism. He was also determined to be able to attend Pete & Lisa's wedding in August 2015, which he did. Dad moved into 29 Valley View in September 2015, and he and Pat named the bungalow 'Ebenezer' which was his father's middle name, one meaning of which is 'thus far God is with us'.

We are so grateful that Dad spent the last 2 years of his life close to his family and being part of the church fellowship which he loved so much. He only missed a couple of morning services over his last 2 years and we probably saw more of him in this time than the previous 24 years since he'd been away.

As a family, we are in no doubt that Dad is now at peace, and as Christians, we believe he is now with his Saviour Jesus in heaven, receiving his eternal reward for a life of Christian service well lived. We are thankful to have had such a lovely, gentle, God-loving man as our dad.

Dad certainly had a difficult start and end to his life and he packed a lot into it, but more than anything else, it is his ministry that he will be remembered for. One of God's faithful servants - kind, gentle, calm and caring - whose ministry touched the lives of many people - the many messages we received following his death gave testimony to this.

So how can we sum up Dad in a few words? He would be delighted if we simply said: Loving Dad, Grandad & Husband, Methodist Minister, and a Cliff College man to the end.



Slightly abridged from the original article. If you would like a full copy please ask Robin Perry.



I was driving along one day when I saw a magnificent rainbow. I was immediately reminded of God's Covenant promise to Noah after the flood and of His countless other promises culminating in the gift of His son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Many years ago I learned I learned the 'word' VIBGYOR to remember the colours of the rainbow.

Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red.

Whilst contemplating these things the following words came to mind in praise of our Lord

V – is for virtue, our Lord's was complete

I – is for incense, they laid at His feet

B – is for burial, the grave could not hold Him

G - is for glory come down to enfold Him

Y – is yourself, respond to His call

O – is for others, He died for us all

R – is for risen, at His feet we fall

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Dates for your diary

3RD DAY

Performance at St. Mary's Church, Market Drayton
Saturday 24th March, 7.30pm

Performance at St. Michael's Church, Lilleshall
Saturday 31st March, 7.30pm

MARKET DRAYTON METHODIST CHURCH

Easter Day – 1st April

8.30am Early Service with Holy Communion

9.15 approx. Easter Breakfast

10.30am with Holy Communion



Community Events

Market Drayton 10k Race
Sunday 13th May 2018



Market Drayton Circuit

Circuit Celebration Weekend
14th – 15th July 2018



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